fortunate in finding Mr. K. George as the Chief Secretary and Mr. A. Venkatarama Aiyar as High Court Judge, worthily succeeded by Mr. V. S. Subrahmanya Aiyar as Head Sirkar Vakil.

4. Devaswoms.—Towards the close of the year it was Her Highness' pleasure to alter somewhat the arrangement for the control and management of the State Devaswoms. ' In so far as his responsibilities and duties in respect of temples, temple officials and religious rites and observances go, the Devaswom Commissioner was made independent of the Dewan and directly answerable to the Ruler; and to this enhanced status and responsibility, Mr. R. Krishna Pillai, Officiating Dewan, was called by Her Highness.

5. Finance.—The end of the year 1100 removed a load of anxiety as regards the year's balance-sheet. Anticipations were gloomy when the budget was framed as nothing but a deficit could be forecasted. Instead, the State exchequer found itself in possession of a surplus of Rs. 10,27,436. The revenue and receipts amounted to Rs. 2,10,67,565 and the expenditure charged to revenue to Rs. 2,00,40,129. The expenditure showed an increase of Rs. 5,58,098. Against capital expenditure, we had to bear Rs. 4,390 on the Quilon-Trivandrum Railway and Rs. 78,034 as the State's contribution towards the Cochin harbour scheme.

As the result mainly of the careful husbanding of finances during the last administration, the assets of the State amounted at the end of 1100 to Rs. 2,08,05,408. The liabilities were Rs. 1,23,85,835, resulting in a credit balance of Rs. 84,19,573 against Rs. 74,74,561 at the end of 1099. Against the capital liability of the State on account of the Shencotta-Quilon Railway which amounted at the end of March 1925 to Bh. Rs. 1,36,80,218, there is a sinking fund which, at the end of 1100, was Rs. 36,34,120 and should be adequate, at the present rate of contribution, to pay off the entire liability on the due date in 1945. In the calculation of the value of assets have to be included the capital outlay of Rs. 54,08,563 on the Quilon-Trivandrum line and the investment on the Kodayar Irrigation Project totalling Rs. 80,48,822. Our actual cash in treasuries together with our realisable investments stood at Rs. 1,90,63,000 which included deposits in the State Savings Bank amounting to Rs. 45,88,788. But some of the investments are in the Government of India 3 per cent. and 3½ per cent. securities and if their current market price alone is taken into account there will be a reduction of about Bh. Rs. 17·5 lakhs under assets.

6. Land and Land Laws.—In a country like ours where agriculture is the mainstay of the people and land is looked upon as the only safe investment, the importance of satisfactory land laws cannot be over-estimated. The Land Assignment Regulation and the Rules issued thereunder have regularised the sale of the areas of land at the disposal of the Government. The attention of the Government has been drawn to some hardships resulting from the Town Lands Rules now in force and certain defects in the Revised Puduval Rules generally. It is doubtful whether all the *puduval* lands registered during the last decade have been brought under actual cultivation and whether the State has really derived the maximum benefit therefrom. Speculation in land is to be deprecated in a country where the extent of waste lands that can grow remunerative food-crops or other commercial products is limited and where, for a variety of reasons, the possibilities of intensive cultivation have not as yet been adequately realised. Statistics of such uncultivated lands will show whether the abuse is so great as to warrant legislation to penalise non-cultivation.

7. Land Records Maintenance.—The scheme of land records maintenance, introduced in the middle of 1096, formed the subject of adverse criticism. The complaints related to the organisation of the department, the agency employed on the work and the rules prescribed. A committee with a non-official majority was appointed in August 1925 to go into the whole question of land records maintenance and make recommendations. The recommendations of the committee were placed in the shape of an official resolution before the Legislative Council on the 4th November 1925, and substantially accepted by the Council. The Government have

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passed orders accepting the resolution; and the new scheme, which I should acknowledge is almost entirely the handiwork of non-officials, came into operation from the 1st Vrischikam 1101.

Under the new arrangement the Land Records Department as a separate entity has been abolished and it has been merged in the Revenue Department out of which it was carved. The reform has not been confined to the organisation of the department, for changes have been made in the methods of work as well. To mitigate the hardship entailed by a strict adherence to the original survey records, the accuracy of which has been challenged, the present instructions are that, in land records work and in the disposal of encroachment cases, the Settlement Demarcation Rules should be kept in view and the provisions of the Survey and Boundaries Regulation regarding the issue of notices, etc., strictly complied with.

8. Lands to Backward Classes.—Concessional registries of *puduval* lands to members of the depressed classes are intended to effect in the long run a more equitable distribution of land and the amelioration of the economic condition of those communities. The Land Revenue Department, which registered a total extent of nearly 1,345 acres under these rules from the 1st Chingam 1098 to the 1st Dhanu 1101 and had only a pending file of 243 applications on the latter date, has done useful work for these communities when it is remembered that, although blocks of land to the extent of nearly 16,000 acres have been specially ear-marked for assignment to depressed classes in the various taluks, applications and assignments have not been confined to those lands, and that members of these communities often pray for the assignment of unassignable lands and sometimes show a clear intention of merely speculating in the lands registered in their names.

9. Lands to War Service Men.—There is reason to believe that several officers and men recruited before the Armistice to the combatant ranks of the Indian Army were not, for some reason or other, able to avail themselves of the benefits of the concessions in the matter of land assignment before those concessions were withdrawn in September 1920. Orders have therefore been issued extending the operation of the old rules to these men for a further period of three years and directing Dewan Peishkars to reserve suitable lands as far as possible for the purpose.

10. Disafforestation.—Further progress was made in the disafforestation for paddy cultivation of swampy areas within reserves in the taluks of Kottarakara, Neduvangad and Pattanamtitta, a total extent of 985 acres having been set free for assignment in those three taluks.

11. Land Colonisation.—Under Rule 6 of the Land Colonisation Rules, fourteen committees, with the local Dewan Peishkar or the Commissioner, Devicolam, as President, the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries or his nominee and the local Divisional Forest Officer as official members and with three non-official members each, have been appointed for making out, after inspection, lists of lands fit to be constituted into compact blocks for colonisation purposes. The lists of selected lands will be published in the *Gazette* ; and the committees will recommend, after hearing the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, which of the blocks should be ear-marked for co-operative societies and which for syndicates.

12. Evening Markets.—The levy of fees in evening markets, which are resorted to by the poorer classes of people, having been represented in the Legislative Council to be a harassing and vexatious impost, the Government ordered that no fees whatever should be levied in such markets. The right of collecting dues in respect of the public evening markets having been already farmed out for the current year and the owners of private markets having taken out licenses, some difficulty is experienced in giving full effect to the orders immediately ; but in some cases arrangements have been come to with the licensees and the fees abolished. In any case, evening markets as a whole will be absolutely free from the beginning of the ensuing year.

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